

Fayette Mayor Charles Evers Gives Testimony



FORMER KU KLUX KLAN leader Dale Walton hears Fayette, Miss., Mayor Charles Evers testify in connection with an alleged assassination plot in which Walton is a

prime suspect. Walton is charged with attempted murder. The hearing took place in Fayette.

—AP WIREPHOTO.

WALTON AWAITS ACTION BY JURY

Suspect Held in Murder Plot Against Evers

By RON HARRIST

FAYETTE, Miss. (AP) — A former Ku Klux Klan leader was bound over to the grand jury Thursday on a charge of attempted murder in connection with an alleged assassination plot against the town's Negro mayor.

Dale Walton, 44-year-old operator of a merchandise and sporting goods store at Tupelo, was placed under \$10,000 bond and returned to the Jefferson County Jail to await action by the grand jury which is scheduled to meet Monday.

Three Negro witnesses, including Mayor Charles Evers, testified they did not see or hear Walton threaten Evers. But City Councilman Ferd Allen, sitting in for Evers as judge of Mayor's Court, said he found probable cause to hold Walton on charges of plotting to kill the mayor.

Walton was arrested near Evers' office Thursday night on charges of speeding and carrying concealed weapons after Evers

ing concealed weapons after Evers reported receiving telephone tips that three men were on their way to Fayette to kill him.

CHARGES LODGED

City Atty. Martha Wood, the only white in the city administration of this predominantly Negro community of 1,600 people, said Thursday morning that charges of conspiracy to commit murder and attempted murder also had been lodged against Walton. A hearing on the other three charges was continued until Sept. 18.

Evers, the first witness at the one-hour-long hearing, testified that he received three anonymous telephone calls about the alleged plot Tuesday.

He said the first call came from a woman, who sounded like she was white, who told him: "Charles, I don't always agree with you, but we can't afford to have you killed." Evers said she told him three men were on their way to Fayette to kill him. The last call, he said, came from a woman who said: "I am a friend of yours. There are three men going to kill you." He said the woman reported the description of the

car and said the trio was armed with weapons.

Following Walton's arrest Tuesday night, two other men were arrested on firearms charges.

HAYWOOD BOOKED

Bobby Haywood, 18, of Tupelo was arrested in Natchez, southwest of here, in a motel room registered to Walton. Officers said he had a .45-caliber sub-machine gun. Because possession of such a weapon is a federal offense, Haywood was turned over to agents of the Federal Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division.

ATF agents traced the sub-machine gun to Pat Massengale, 50, of Hattiesburg, who was arrested at his home and charged with illegally transferring the weapon to Haywood and released on a \$1,000 personal recognizance bond.

Other witnesses at Walton's trial Thursday were Police Chief Robert Vanderson of Fayette, who testified he stopped Walton for speeding, and Roose-

velt Anderson, a Fayette resident, who testified he saw Walton and another man in Fayette several times the day before Walton's arrest.

Vanderson said he spotted a loaded shotgun and a loaded pistol in the car and Walton "had his hand on the pistol." He said he found two shotguns in the trunk of the car.

JORDAN OBJECTS

Defense Atty. Billy Jordan of Columbus objected repeatedly to questions and answers but Allen overruled him each time.

Jordan asked each witness if they heard or saw Walton make an overt threat to Evers. Each said they did not.

"Did this defendant make any move or threats against your life? Any motion of a threat against your life?" Jordan asked Evers.

"I can't say that," Evers replied.

When the prosecution rested its case, Judge Allen started: "I find . . ." He was stopped short by Miss Wood, the city attorney. "The defense must present its case."

EVERS COMMENTS

Jordan called no witnesses but said that as long as he had been practicing law this was "undoubtedly not only the weakest case I have witnessed, but this is the first case where there is no case at all. All the witnesses have testified that 'No, sir' they have not seen any threats made against Evers."

About 50 people—most of them Negro—watched the proceedings in the City Hall building. The onlookers sat on folding chairs, while the principals in the case sat around a long, folding table.

After the hearing, Evers said the "mere fact that he (Walton) got a hearing was great."

"It's the fact we gave him a hearing—period—is above and beyond any justice we've ever gotten. We've never got that kind of justice. I know the trial was fair and just. It might have been a little unorthodox because of some of our training and background."

Walton, attired in a dark suit and wearing a ring with a Confederate insignia, told a reporter in his jail cell in the morning: "I decline any other statement other than the simple truth of the matter that I am not guilty of any of these charges."

Federal agents said Walton was a former imperial wizard of the Ku Klux Klan Knights of

the Green Forest, a north Mississippi organization, and former exalted cyclops of the United Klans of America.

The federal government owns more than 700 million acres of land, including national parks covering about 27 million acres.